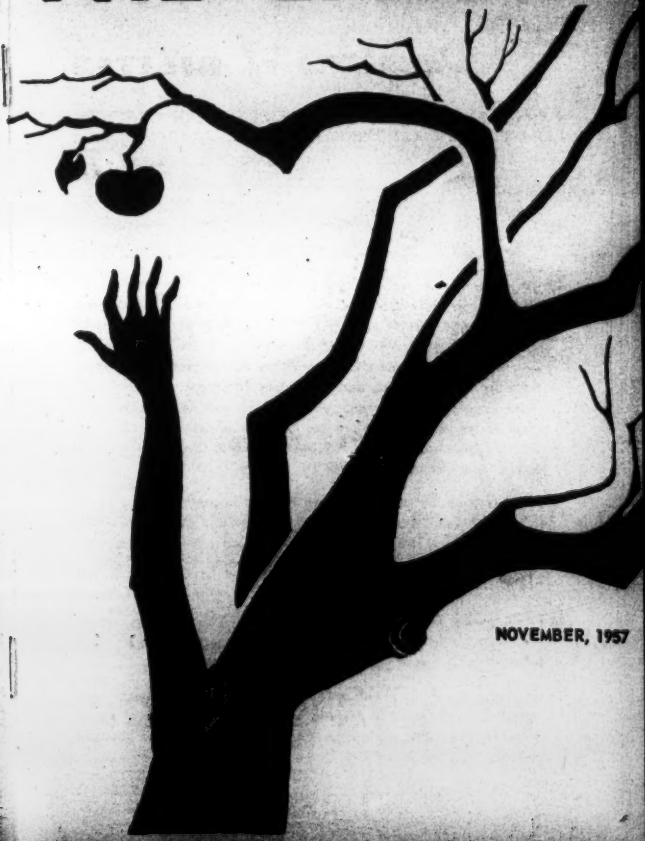
THE LADDER



NOVEMBER, 1957

purpose of the

Daughters of BILITIS

A WOMEN'S ORGANIZATION FOR THE PURPOSE OF PROMOTING THE INTEGRATION OF THE HOMOSEXUAL INTO SOCIETY BY:

1. Education of the variant, with particular emphasis on the psychological, physiological and sociological aspects, to enable her to understand herself and make her adjustment to society in all its social, civic and economic implications—this to be accomplished by establishing and maintaining as complete a library as possible of both fiction and non-fiction literature on the sex deviant theme; by sponsoring public discussions on pertinent subjects to be conducted by leading members of the legal, psychiatric, religious and other professions; by advocating a mode of behavior and dress acceptable to society.

2. Education of the public at large through acceptance first of the individual, leading to an eventual breakdown of erroneous taboos and prejudices; through public discussion meetings aforementioned; through dissemination of educational literature on the homosexual theme.

3. Participation in research projects by duly authorized and responsible psychologists, sociologists and other such experts directed towards further knowledge of the homosexual.

4. Investigation of the penal code as it pertains to the homosexual, proposal of changes to provide an equitable handling of cases involving this minority group, and promotion of these changes through due process of law in the state legislatures.

the Ladder

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Cover by Kay Somers

The Open Mind

A REVIEW OF THREE PROGRAMS

In late 1956 and early 1957 television station WRCA-TV in New York City presented three panel discussions on various phases of homosexuality on the program "The Open Mind".

These three programs were tape recorded by members of the Mattachine Society in New York and presented at the Mattachine convention last September in San Francisco.

The following review of this significant step in the growth of American television is by THE LADDER's Los Angeles correspondent, Sten Russell. -ED.

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I--"Introduction of Problem of Homosexuality" - Aug. 4, 1956.

Panel consisted of Florence Kelley, attorney; R.W. Laidlaw, psychologist; Dr. (Dean) August Swift, clergyman, and the moderator. Mr. Laidlaw said that homosexuality was not a clinical entity but covered a broad range of human experience...that it was a continuum wherein one might find persons ranging all the way from those being almost completely heterosexual to those completely homosexual...that there was an estimated 4% of the male population who were exclusively homosexual. He said that an estimated 37%-50% of the male population had had at least one homosexual experience during adolescence or afterwards.

Miss Kelley felt that the 37%-50% statistics quoted above didn't prove much, that such rare experiences only signified experimentation. Taking the matter from the legal end, Miss Kelley said that New York was less primitive than some other states but that the law still did nowhere reflect the extended knowledge and understanding gained on the matter by psychiatry.

Laidlaw stated that there were constitutional factors (predisposition to homosexual experience), environmental factors and psychological factors involved in the causes of homosexual behavior.

The moderator asked if homosexuality harmed society. Was it a crime to be punished or a problem to be treated?

Dean Swift said the question was: should the law deal with people who were not harming society? Miss Kelley said that the attorneys would not go along with Dean Swift's implicit assumption when children were involved until they knew that homosexual offenders (with children) could be treated.

Laidlaw said that of course they could be treated.

Miss Kelley retorted, "Yeah, anything can be treated... but how successfully?" There followed a discussion by Laidlaw regarding allaying anxiety by knowledge.

The moderator asked if the homosexual could accept himself if society didn't accept him. The conclusion was that it was very difficult, indeed. The moderator asked if there were cultural factors in the present making for more homosexuality. Miss Kelley asked if homosexuality were growing or just being more talked about. She cited Kinsey's books as examples. The moderator said that the matter of national "security" had focussed attention on this problem. He mentioned blackmail potential as part of the "security problem".

Laidlaw said that a homosexual was not necessarily neurotic or psychotic, but that he was more likely to be in certain ways, due mainly to the pressures of public opinion which caused him to have to hide and cover up his actions and desires. Dean Swift was concerned as to the shock children experienced when approached by adult males. Laidlaw said that that depended on the predisposition of the child. Miss Kelley said that she was not worried about the "predisposition of the child," but that the American Law Institute wished to protect any child from the traumatic shock of any sexual attack.

The moderator queried as to what was a well-conditioned youngster and a good environment? Laidlaw said he thought that schools segregated by sex were a bad thing

in this regard...that coeducational schools were best and that sex education should be taught in the schools. Dean Swift mentioned the importance of education not only in the schools but in the church and home. Especially in the home, he said, there should be a deep love between parents evident to the child so that he may find a desire for the same thing when he grows up.

II--"Homosexuality, A Psychological Approach"-
Sept. 29, 1956.

Panel consisted of Dr. Phillip Pollatin, psychiatrist; Dr. Harry Backwin, pediatrician, and the moderator. Dr. Backwin said that according to Dr. Kinsey some 50% of children indulge in sex play with the same sex...that this was a normal phase of childhood. Dr. Backwin also mentioned what he considered a constitutional or inborn deviation, that of a small group of boys who dressed as girls.

Dr. Pollatin felt the genesis of the whole matter lay in the realm of the parent-child relationship where there might be an aggressive, dominant, controlling mother and a passive, meek father or, on the other hand, the picture might be reversed to the other extreme where the father was dominant, but threatening to the child. He said that the emotional climate was different for each child of the same parents so that one could never say that brothers and sisters had had the same "environment", even though they were raised in the same family.

Dr. Backwin felt that it was more a matter of different susceptibilities; that the "soil" was different in each case; that it was an inborn potential perhaps transmitted through the genes. He felt that given this "fertile soil" together with an unhappy family life and a chance meeting with an aggressive adult of the same sex, a homosexual would develop. Dr. Pollatin countered that a latent homosexual person who was never brought out would nevertheless have neurotic symptoms of his problem. The moderator queried as to whether with a bad marriage constantly before the child, would he try to escape the heterosexual relationship? Dr. Pollatin didn't think the cause was that direct. Dr. Backwin said that those

people between the extremes of complete heterosexuality and complete homosexuality could "be helped".

Suggestions given for diverting femininity in boys were for the father to give masculine examples to the child... "take him to a ball game," for instance!

III--"Male and Female in American Culture"- Jan. 12,1957.

Panel consisted of Margaret Mead, anthropoligist and writer; Max Lerner, journalist, historian and sociologist, and the moderator. The moderator introduced the subject by referring to the Life Magazine article on "The American Woman," her changing roles and responsibilities.

Miss Mead discussed the cultural factors of homosexuality in general...the institutionalization of an ordinary variation in sex drives. Lerner said, "Let's go back to these cultures that didn't have it...a simple culture?" Miss Mead couldn't think of any that didn't have it, simple or complicated. She cited the Plains Indians who badgered their boys till the weakest or most sensitive gave up and dressed like women. Lerner said it was a matter of expectations. Miss Meade said it was more a matter of "do you have a 'word' for it?" "Today," she said, "even the girls can't be 'sissy'."

The problem entered where a potential became a limited and named possibility with laws, jokes and clothes attached. Lerner felt that a "word" was the last thing that happened in the course of human events. Upon a simple Puritan society had been superimposed sensuousness and sensuality and people were caught in a cultural gap. He mentioned the romantic concept with Marilyn Monroe and Clark Gable playing star roles.

Miss Mead said that the problem arose when one attempted to define sex identity in terms of occupation and temperament. She felt that this was the basic mistake this or any society could make and led to a curbing and warping of the great human potential for variety and adjustment to changing conditions.

(Continued on page 22)

Chance

A Story by Gene Damon

I am wondering about you, sitting there in the gloom across the room from me. I noticed you when you came in and walked blindly (or so I thought) to that corner booth. Your hands are strong and nerveless and blunt, still your eyes and head look very sad.

Could you be waiting for a friend? Or are you tired and only wanting a minute away from the noisy confusion outside on the street? It is nearly six o'clock and people are going home from work while others are looking for a place to eat downtown before their own personal evenings begin. I am still wondering about you and there is no real reason for my curiosity. Perhaps it is prompted by boredom or pity for your apparent unhappiness. Then again it might be only impatience I see in your face, in the set of your arms and hands. Your drink looks as if it might revive even the most exhausted for a while. My drink is pale in comparison.

The crowds seem to be thinning and growing quiet, and I should start home but I think I shall have to wait and watch a while longer. If I thought I had a right, I would walk over and talk to you. How silly, I wouldn't or couldn't do that even with some mythical right. (I wonder what decides these things for people?) I wonder if you smoke as constantly always as you are now? I never can; though I would like to. My throat always rebels after five or six in a row. Still I imagine you are as unaware of your smoking as you seem to be of this room. Somehow this room seems terribly real to me. It is long and low and poor in lighting. The music bellows for so narrow a place.

Seven o'clock now and I am hungry; in a moment I will call the girl over and order something to eat. Are you hungry? After all, it's late enough to be hungry,

especially with two drinks behind you. Maybe another drink would be better; I ought to try to drink as fast as you are, if I am to watch you through the same eyes.

More people coming in now; that boy at the bar is either very tired or very tight; he droops. Perhaps I am drooping a little. If I could, I would eat or go home. What decides this for me? I would look silly flipping a coin by myself.

"Would you like to see a menu?" The waitress materialized from nowhere.

"Yes, please; or, rather, no. I'd like a grilled cheese sandwich and another drink."

"Okay."

My God! They get more polite day by day. Oh well, the sandwich will give me another reason to stay here, although it doesn't seem to be much of a place to stay.

These places lull time away and now it is nearly eight. I keep thinking you are going to drink and stare straight ahead all night. I will have to give in before then I am afraid. I can feel tiredness closing in already. The boy at the bar is definitely tight; he droops more all the time. His coat looks sad, as if it had spent its entire life thrown over stools. The bartender looks the same as he did a month ago, although I overheard a waitress say he was new. Maybe they all look alike?

Can't you feel this room at all? What can anyone think so ardently as to obliterate her surroundings completely? How many years has it been since I could think or dream that well? Work was dull today. It is every day, but today I knew I would have to come here and sit and drink and watch. I didn't expect any diversion as puzzling as you are, my silent compatriot. The people I see are seldom diverting even for a moment, to say nothing of hours. You are sad though not impatient. You show your sadness very clearly but you wear it well. When I am sad, I just look like the boy at the bar: very droopy, very uncompelling. It is pleasant to see a kind of

melancholy which enhances and becomes as yours does.

Well, things are a little better now. A sandwich is a simple thing to see, but a satisfying thing to eat. How can you drink so steadily without eating? Perhaps you ate before you came here but I doubt it. More people coming all the time and very few leaving. That is the trouble with public places. They clutter up so easily. The two girls in the booth next to yours look very happy, almost as if they were celebrating an occasion. I'd like to be as young as they are, or would I? No, probably not. There is too much growing and changing to do when you are that young. I don't feel like growing or changing tonight. Maybe tomorrow, but not tonight.

Oh, oh, you are looking about ready to leave. Look over here once before you go. I want to know if you even remember me. Dear Jan, remember me.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Tuesday, Nov. 26 - Leo Zeff, clinical psychologist, will speak on "Depth Psychology and Religion" at the public discussion meeting, 465 Geary St. The room has been changed to Studio 30 (third floor). Time remains 8:15 p.m. This should be a revealing and challenging egening.

Friday, Dec. 6 - Gab 'n Java session at 2217 Fillmore St., 8 p.m. Informal bull session type meeting for women only.

Wednesday, Dec. 11 - Monthly business meeting, 2174 California St., 8 p.m., basement apartment.

Tuesday, Dec. 17 - Ernest Besig, head of the Northern California division of the American Civil Liberties Union, will speak on "Your Civil Liberties" at 8:15 p.m., 465 Geary St., Studio 30.

ON WEARING SLACKS

New Twist to an Old Beef

All too often we have heard the arguments of propriety and good taste with regard to the wearing of slacks by women. Typical is this "pet peeve" letter printed recently in the "San Francisco Examiner":

> When ladies young and old wear sloppy slacks or tight pants on Market St. I wish I had a water pistol and could give each one of them a good squirt. Ladies, please be ladies.

Apropos of the above is the report from Iran by John B. McDermott recently published in the "San Francisco Chronicle" which went as follows:

"Ever see a good-looking blonde attired only in her undies strolling along Main Street?

"Well, what Lady Godiva in all her nudity did to shock a staid English village in the distant past is being repeated here in conservative, old Persia - to a lesser degree, of course - by unknowing American gals.

"It's not that these new arrivals enjoy parading in their scanties down crowded Faderi street, it's just that they don't realize what they are doing. The girls are among the few tourists who arrive here. They are attired in comfortable slacks for the long hops in between cities out in the Middle East.

"Their first reaction is to be pleased and flattered by the smiles and friendly stares of men who eye them in open approval. A second reaction is puzzlement because of obviously disapproving glances from the many veiled women wrapped in full-length, usually all black, 'chadors,' which resemble nun's attire, but in addition cover half the face.

"To the Iranian, a woman in slacks is a woman in only her underwear. Underneath the chador veil-cloaks the average Iranian female wears slacks as her 'undies'."

ON ACCEPTING FEMININITY

One of the problems that is paramount in the adjustment of the Lesbian is the acceptance of her "femininity". Now what do we mean by "femininity"? Unfortunately, this term is so vague and uncertain that it has been used to describe every kind of definition of womankind, and to support the rankest superstitions of our times.

Were we to describe femininity as merely a sex-membership, rather than a limitation on our humanity, most of us would have no trouble in accepting our womanhood. But in as much as "femininity" involves to some so many alleged and negative traits such as lack of courage, originality and intelligence, it is against this specific concept that so many Lesbians revolt.

Curiously enough, when a Lesbian (or as often a heterosexual woman) adopts a masculine complex, we find that she is very selective in the so-called masculine traits she accepts. She may want to mimic a "clean-cut" man, or a calm, quiet refined man, - while at the same time rejecting what she calls the objectionable features of the opposite sex. There's no fault in a woman wanting to be clean-cut, dignified or courageous; but the error is the assumption that these qualities are the monopoly of the male sex. The anthropologist Margaret Mead has some pertinent comments to make on this subject in her book "Male and Female".

"Most children take maleness or femaleness as their first identification of themselves. But once the identification is made, the growing child then begins to compare itself not only in physique, but even more importantly in impulse and interest with those about it. 'I am a girl, but I am fleet of foot and love to run and jump. Running and leaping are for boys, not girls.' So the child, experiencing itself is forced to reject such parts of it s particular biological inheritance as conflict sharply with the sex stereotype of it s culture."

How realistic are our present sex stereotypes? Ono

must go outside our own culture or back in history to see that conventional sex ideal types differ among diverse people, much as standards of beauty may vary also. At present the anthropological literature on the subject is meager, but highly suggests a need for new concepts of "sex-typing". Dr. Mead's analysis of three cultures in New Guinea may not necessarily prove that there are no temperamental differences between man and women. But it does show the immense malleability of human nature and the vast superposition of culture over biology in the race of man.

A study of sexual temperament among Americans ("Sex and Personality" - Terman and Miles) in 1936 brought out a startling result that among women there was a direct correlation between education, intelligence, and masculine-interest quotients. This does not mean that masculine women are more intelligent or learned than their more feminine sisters, but it does imply that our traditional concepts of "feminine interests" (upon which the tests were based) are those involving a limitation, a narrowing of cultural contacts, and a basic deficiency in education.

We must not reject our femininity, rather, we should broaden our ideas of what this definition constitutes. Dr. Mead advocates "sex membership as a cross-constitutional classification...then the little girl who shows a greater need to take things apart than most other girls need not be classified as a female of a certain kind. In such a world, no child would be forced to deny its sex membership for the special gifts that made it.

"But if each sex is to realize its sex-membership fully, each boy and girl must also feel as a whole human being. We are human beings first."

So can we accept our femininity? Of course we can if only we enlarge our view to include all women: the gentle, the shy, the brave, the meek, the enterprising, the flamboyant - and, perhaps, even you!

- Betty Simmons

LESBIANA

31. THE RAINBOW by D. H. Lawrence. Avon Publications, Inc., New York.

This lengthy tale includes part of a chapter devoted to a young girl's fascination for her teacher. The climax of this fascination occurs during a swimming scene.

(This item was erroneously printed last month under the title of Lawrence's book "Women in Love". The latter actually treats in part with male homosexuality.)

33. WHISPER THEIR LOVE by Valerie Taylor, Crest Books, Fawcett Publishing Co., 1957.

A paperback set in a girls school detailing the love affair between an 18-year-old student and the dean of women. The writing is not too bad, the characters come to life and the story moves at a fast pace.

34. THE UNLIT LAMP by Radclyffe Hall (1924). Jonathan Cape and Harrison Smith.

An early work by the author of "The Well of Loneliness" concerning the sacrifice of a girl's entire life to the designs of selfish parents. A profound and tragic study, it well exemplifies the lines of Browning:

"And the sin I impute to each frustrate ghost
Is the unlit lamp and the ungirt loin."

35. AWAKE, MONIQUE by Astrid Van Royen. Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1957.

Tenderly and with candid beauty, Astrid tells her life story so that her 11-year-old daughter

Monique can read it when she grows up. Although Astrid's life is purely heterosexual with one minor exception, there is an important Lesbian couple in the book, her Aunt Carla and Dini, Carla's young friend.

Astrid goes at an early age to live in the house of Renier, her uncle by marriage. She and Renier live upstairs and his wife (in name only) Carla and Dini live downstairs. There is complete acceptance between the two strange households, even to Renier making an impassioned plea for understanding and explaining that Dini makes Carla happier than any man could. Really a delightful reading experience.

6. A LESSON IN LOVE by Margaret Creal. Simon and Schuster, 1957.

A sensitive, well-written first novel about a Canadian boarding school for girls. Primarily the story of a 15-year-old girl's love affair with a 17-year-old girl. Very sad, very cruel and very unfortunate.

7. THE FE..R AND THE GUILT by Wilene Shaw. Ace Books, Inc., 1954.

A Lesbian version of 'Tobacco Road'. A poignant story of moral and spiritual degradation on a backwoods farm wherein the main protagonist finds her own father as rival.

8. STEPPENWOLF by Hermann Hesse. Henry Holt & Co., 1929.

A strange, introspective story allegorizing the madness of the postwar era. Among the events are a magic theatre where one can split one's personality, a Lesbian episode, and a reincarnated Mozart who is addicted to the radio.

"STEVIE"

A Story by Barbara Stephens

The lure of the waterfront at night! The lone gull calls to the dark sea, with the foamed waves scurling on. By the rotting piers and the tall dank sheds I loitered, smelling the salt spray and the acrid kelp on the sand. The fog was coming in, with the sounds of oars on the waters. Was it a rowboat coming up the breakwater? I could hardly see. A cry pierced the darkness.

"Land ho! Avast ye swabs - trim the sails, and man the bilge-pumps!"

The boat merged into view, bucking the white surf like a stallion. A thin lithe figure in jeans and a sailor cap jumped onto the sand, and pulled the boat to shore.

"Come on Mary, me mate - jump lively!

"Oh, a sailor's life is a jolly life,
"The sea, the sea's me real wife;
"A sailor-lad's be strong and brave
"At home with ev'ry buckin' wave--"

She started a jaunty little horn-pipe dance, which stopped the moment she spotted me on the pier.

"Hello", she cried, "I'm Stevie."

I walked over to her boat. She couldn't have been over ten. "Isn't it late for a little girl to be out?" I asked.

"I'm not a little girl! I'm a sailor like Daddy - an' I'm strong - that's why they call me Stevie!"

"Her real name's Stephenie," shouted the other girl in the boat.

"I'm not Stephenie - don't call me that. I'm Steve! Steve!"

A woman now appeared on the pier, calling the girl's name.

"Stephenie, Stephenie, are you back?"

"Yes, Mommy."

"Oh, Stephenie, don't go away again like that. You worry your Mommy so."

"O fiddle," murmured Steve, as she and Mary ran after her mother in the night.

* * * * *

For several weeks I drifted up and down the coast with my sketchbook, drawing in the dark pines and the lonesome sea-green waters. And Stevie became my companion. I would ask her: "Where is your Daddy?"

"Oh, he's in Hong Kong now, or Pago Pago, or Singapore. Last time he left I cried for him to take me with him. He comes back with shells, and jewel-cases and cocoanut masks, an' sometimes he gets Mommy some real silk blouses from Tokyo. An' he talks about the mos' wonerful things: people dancing under the palm trees in Tahiti, an' awful magic in New Guinea, an' devil-dances, an'--"

"I bet you'd like to be there."

"I will when I'm grown up - for Daddy's teaching me all about ships; he says I'm a first-class seaman already." She grew pensive. "You know, every time I see a seagull I get that feeling. I guess it's 'cause I'm a natural-born sailor like Daddy says I am. I want to go so far away, to all those funny places - I want to feel the sea-foam stinging my face, and the wind in my hair - - An' I love that old creaky sound of the boat as it bucks the water."

I looked into her eyes and saw in that far-off expression all the romance of Maui-Maui, Pago Pago, and the other exotic, strange places. "Well, maybe" I said, "when you grow up, you'll buy a yacht and travel to these lands?"

"Bet your boots I will, an' I'll take Mary with me - an'

I'll be Cap'n, an' we'll sail the seven seas - -

"Oh, the sailor's life's the jolly life,
"The sea, the sea's me real wife;
"A - -"

She twirled off down the sands, toward her house in the distance.

A month later, I saw her with her Daddy, in a sailboat embarking from the pier. Nor could I forget the far-off look in her eyes as the screaming gulls swirled past the sails. Down the dim waters, the dark waters, her cry came back to me:

"Ahoy mates, avast ye swabs! Trim the sails and man the bilge-pumps! Awa-y ho!"

a review

UNDERSTANDING HUMAN NATURE

Alfred Adler (1957 - Premier Books)

A new edition of Alfred Adler's classic on psychology has appeared in a pocket book edition. Whereas Adler's name may be forgotten, many of his concepts are remarkably alive in contemporary psychological thought, such as "security motivations", "power compulsions", "inferiority complexes" and "masculine protest."

The pivot of Adler's thought is the will to power, or the desire for dominance and assertion of the ego. As being a product of late 19th century Vienna, an era noted for militaristic concepts, it is not surprising to find this thought paramount in his mind.

"We fashion our own experiences.

"The development of the striving for power is the most

prominent evil of our civilization---and has given us a false basis for the judgment of values.

"As things stand now there is a constant striving on the part of men to dominate women, and an appropriate dissatisfaction with masculine domination on the part of women--leading to psychic dissonances which are extraordinarily painful to both sexes.

"What we consider 'masculine' nowadays is common knowledge. Above all it is something purely egoistic--gives a feeling of superiority and dominance over others, with the aid of seemingly 'active' characteristics such as courage, strength, winning of victories, the acquisition of position, honors, titles.

"The advantages of being a man are, under such conditions, very alluring---we must not be astonished that it would seem that in our culture every woman wanted to be a man!

"Thus 'masculine' signifies worthwhile, powerful, victorious, capable, whereas 'feminine' becomes identical with obedient, servile, subordinate.

"This 'masculine response'--designated as the 'boy-girl', or the 'mannish woman', is seen to be as often of social origin as of congenital or glandular basis. For the reason that there are only two sex roles possible-----. Desertion from the role of woman can therefore appear only as 'masculine.'"

All in all, Dr. Adler places a disproportionate emphasis on dominance-submission patterns, and for that he's quite culture-bound. There are other cultures whose ideals differ, being based on tradition, or on cooperation. And there are peoples who rank generosity above pecuniary wealth. In addition, our own times have changed since the first appearance of this book in 1927: changes fortunately in the direction of amiability and mutual aid among the two sexes. Yet, reading Dr. Adler again is an insight as to how a fiercely competitive and individualistic culture such as our own has shaped the American mind and personality.

- Patricia Lamson

Essay on a Lesbian

I am a Lesbian. In that simple statement I mean to express the most outstanding single part of my whole existence. I hasten to make clear just what I mean by that term. I am a Lesbian means to most of us one simple fact. I, a woman, love other women. For most of us this also means I do not love men now nor have I ever, and most probably never will. Beyond this, for most of us it means more clearly and more importantly, I love one woman to the exclusion of all other beings.

This circumstance of being a Lesbian has existed and will always exist. We are to a certain extent a maligned and mistreated, even persecuted, group. This also will continue to exist to a greater and sometimes lesser degree. So what!

We, all of us, You and I, have a wonderful kind of magic within ourselves, and our lives and our loves show it. So I can't take my little piece of chalk and write my beloved's name on the nearest sidewalk. Not for a moment is that a cause or justification for jealousy of the heterosexual. Don't run away angry! I fully realize we suffer injustice and prejudice and I have seen it hurt and damage other people. I just can't find a good enough reason in all this to cringe and cry. Stand up and accept yourself. Don't be overly proud, but don't crawl. There are many blessings. Each of us would probably name a different thing as blessing. For me there is the strange feeling on entering a room full of unknown people that someone is a friend, and suddenly a casual smile from across the room confirms that feeling and you are welcome there. I don't believe I would give up that kind of third eye for the little piece of chalk and sidewalk. The exquisite pain of holding hands when you know

it must be a secret. "To kiss in a shadow" has real advantages, even merits.

I love classical music and very good literature. In some circles that's like having two heads. I have noticed that the people who criticize me as a person in general are the same who would be the first to look us up for our leanings sexually. I have never paid any attention to the book burners nor to those who sneer loudly at good music, so I certainly will not cringe before the scorn of these same people when they speak out against some other facet in my life. Why should I?

I said when I began, I am a Lesbian. I do not consider this fact to be a disadvantage nor an advantage. I feel neither pride nor much fear. I have accepted myself and all other things come after this.

- B.G.

CHURCH RULES ON HOMOSEXUALITY

An apparently direct result of the Wolfenden Report in England is the recent approval by the Church of England Assembly that homosexual conduct between consenting adults is no crime.

The Assembly, which is the church's ranking executive committee, approved the resolution by a vote of 155 to 138.

The Wolfenden Committee recommended, in brief, that English law be changed so that homosexual behavior between consenting adults in private be no longer a criminal offence.

With respect to the church's action, the Archbishop of Canterbury said homosexuality violated manhood. But he argued it is unjust to make the homosexual a criminal "while the man who breaks up a home by adultery...is regarded as guilty of no offence."

Essay on a Lesbian

I am a Lesbian. In that simple statement I mean to express the most outstanding single part of my whole existence. I hasten to make clear just what I mean by that term. I am a Lesbian means to most of us one simple fact. I, a woman, love other women. For most of us this also means I do not love men now nor have I ever, and most probably never will. Beyond this, for most of us it means more clearly and more importantly, I love one woman to the exclusion of all other beings.

This circumstance of being a Lesbian has existed and will always exist. We are to a certain extent a maligned and mistreated, even persecuted, group. This also will continue to exist to a greater and sometimes lesser degree. So what!

We, all of us, You and I, have a wonderful kind of magic within ourselves, and our lives and our loves show it. So I can't take my little piece of chalk and write my beloved's name on the nearest sidewalk. Not for a moment is that a cause or justification for jealousy of the heterosexual. Don't run away angry! I fully realize we suffer injustice and prejudice and I have seen it hurt and damage other people. I just can't find a good enough reason in all this to cringe and cry. Stand up and accept yourself. Don't be overly proud, but don't crawl. There are many blessings. Each of us would probably name a different thing as blessing. For me there is the strange feeling on entering a room full of unknown people that someone is a friend, and suddenly a casual smile from across the room confirms that feeling and you are welcome there. I don't believe I would give up that kind of third eye for the little piece of chalk and sidewalk. The exquisite pain of holding hands when you know

it must be a secret. "To kiss in a shadow" has real advantages, even merits.

I love classical music and very good literature. In some circles that's like having two heads. I have noticed that the people who criticize me as a person in general are the same who would be the first to look us up for our leanings sexually. I have never paid any attention to the book burners nor to those who sneer loudly at good music, so I certainly will not cringe before the scorn of these same people when they speak out against some other facet in my life. Why should I?

I said when I began, I am a Lesbian. I do not consider this fact to be a disadvantage nor an advantage. I feel neither pride nor much fear. I have accepted myself and all other things come after this.

- B.G.

CHURCH RULES ON HOMOSEXUALITY

An apparently direct result of the Wolfenden Report in England is the recent approval by the Church of England Assembly that homosexual conduct between consenting adults is no crime.

The Assembly, which is the church's ranking executive committee, approved the resolution by a vote of 155 to 138.

The Wolfenden Committee recommended, in brief, that English law be changed so that homosexual behavior between consenting adults in private be no longer a criminal offence.

With respect to the church's action, the Archbishop of Canterbury said homosexuality violated manhood. But he argued it is unjust to make the homosexual a criminal "while the man who breaks up a home by adultery...is regarded as guilty of no offence."

THE OPEN MIND - A Review of Three Programs

(Continued from page 7)

Lerner said that this had been an agrarian society with a sharp division of labor, that we had become the most rapidly changing society anywhere. There has been a great change of "class belonging". Mothers and fathers no longer have a model in their mind of how men and women should act. This confusion goes beyond the sexual role itself, although that is included. The children are naturally lost. A child needs definiteness in what is expected of him.

Miss Mead said what a child needs is a sense of identity ...to know that he belongs to a class, region, nationality and the human race; but that to tell a boy who has a talent for playing the violin that he was feminine, or a girl with a talent for mechanics that she was masculine, was to set a pattern for mistaken identity in their minds.

Lerner said, "Words - poo." Examples are the only things that count.

Miss Mead said "yes, in an unchanging society."

Lerner said that parents needed clarity without anxiety. He mentionde that the life goals of this society were Money, Power and Prestige. The "Cult of Newism" dominates everything. Miss Mead agreed it was a matter of "values" and that the whole problem under discussion was but a symptom of our inability to accept the full range of the human potential.

- Sten Russell

MATTACHINE TO DISCUSS EMPLOYMENT

A panel discussion on employment will be held by the Mattachine Society at 8 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 5, at the Friends Center, 1830 Sutter St., San Francisco. Comprising the panel will be people working in the employment field. Helen Sanders will represent the Daughters of Bilitis on the panel.

READERS RESPOND

"I want to wish THE LADDER a happy birthday and congratulate you on the new cover, which seems one of the loveliest and most fitting that could be imagined. Don't change it too soon again!

"The historical sketch of the Daughters and THE LADDER was most interesting. I am enclosing my check for those first five numbers that are promised for April 15. I was also interested in your notice on page six of the projected research project, collecting case histories of Lesbians. If complete and absolute anonymity can be promised I would be willing to be a guinea pig.

"Again, congratulations on the first-class publishing job you are doing on THE LADDER, and best wishes for prosperous days ahead."

J.A., Kansas City, Kan.

The research project mentioned is just getting under way and will be divided into two parts. The first entails intensive personal case histories plus consultation with the psychiatrist working with us. The second will be in the form of a comprehensive questionnaire to be circulated to as many Lesbians as are interested. Complete and absolute anonymity is, of course, guaranteed with reference to the questionnaire. - ED.

• • • • •

"I have been receiving THE LADDER and have been a member of the Daughters of Bilitis for more than a year now. The day my copy arrives I sit and read it from cover to cover.

"I enjoy and have learned a good deal from THE

LADDER. One thing I do regret is the distance. I do wish I were able to attend your monthly meetings.

"If only there was a chapter here in New York or New Jersey I would be the first to join. I do not know of any girls, like myself, who would be interested.

"If you know of any girls in the New York City area who are interested would it be possible to sendtheir addresses? In that way maybe a chapter of the Daughters of Bilitis could be organized here in the East.

"Continue the wonderful work you are doing."

G.M., Orange, N. J.

We have received many inquiries regarding starting a chapter of the DOB in the East. Some of us are planning a trip to New York next September in connection with the Mattachine Society convention and will be able to meet with anyone interested in forming a New York DOB chapter. It will be appreciated if anyone interested will drop us a line so that we can get the groundwork started between now and September.

This also holds true for those of you in the L.A. area who are interested. Some of us will be down over a weekend in late January.

Postal regulations and the nature of our organization being what they are, we cannot divulge addresses of our subscribers. - ED.

* * * * *

"My gratitude for the haunting story by Miss Addison in the last issue. For memory of a time when I had read my first, 'The Well of Loneliness',

and knew the loss of an unknown, unseen friend."

B.S., San Leandro, Calif.

• • • • •

"Received copy of THE LADDER some months ago - amazed! May your courageous undertaking grow and flourish and the fruits of your labor be savory with appreciation from the 'hungry'.

"Would like to get back copies of Vol. 1, numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, etc. Are they available?

"Have subscribed to ONE but find it is not exactly a woman's magazine - a little disappointed.

"Am also enclosing remittance to cover cost of book, 'Wind Woman'.

R.A.L., St. Paul, Minn.

For information on the FIRST FIVE issues of THE LADDER see page 26. Copies of other back issues are available for 50 cents each, or you may backdate your subscription to start with any issue except the first five. - ED.

• • • • •

"Congratulations on the cover of your October issue, that is excellent art work.

"I enjoyed Carol Hales' article on personal integrity and feel that the entire issue was of extremely high literary quality. I am delighted to notice other readers responding with contributions and encouragement."

B.G., Kansas City, Kan.

So are we! - ED.

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MEMBERSHIP in the *DAUGHTERS OF BILITIS* may be either a voting or associate membership.

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THE LADDER: A monthly publication by the *Daughters of Bilitis, Inc.*, mailed by first class mail in a plain sealed envelope for $2.50 per year.

CONTRIBUTIONS are gratefully accepted from anyone who wishes to assist us in our work. We are a non-profit corporation working entirely on donated labor. Our fees are not of such amounts as to allow for much expansion of the publication. While men may not become members of the *Daughters of Bilitis, Inc.*, many have expressed interest in our efforts and our publication and have made contributions to further our work. Of course, anyone over 21 years of age may subscribe to *THE LADDER*.

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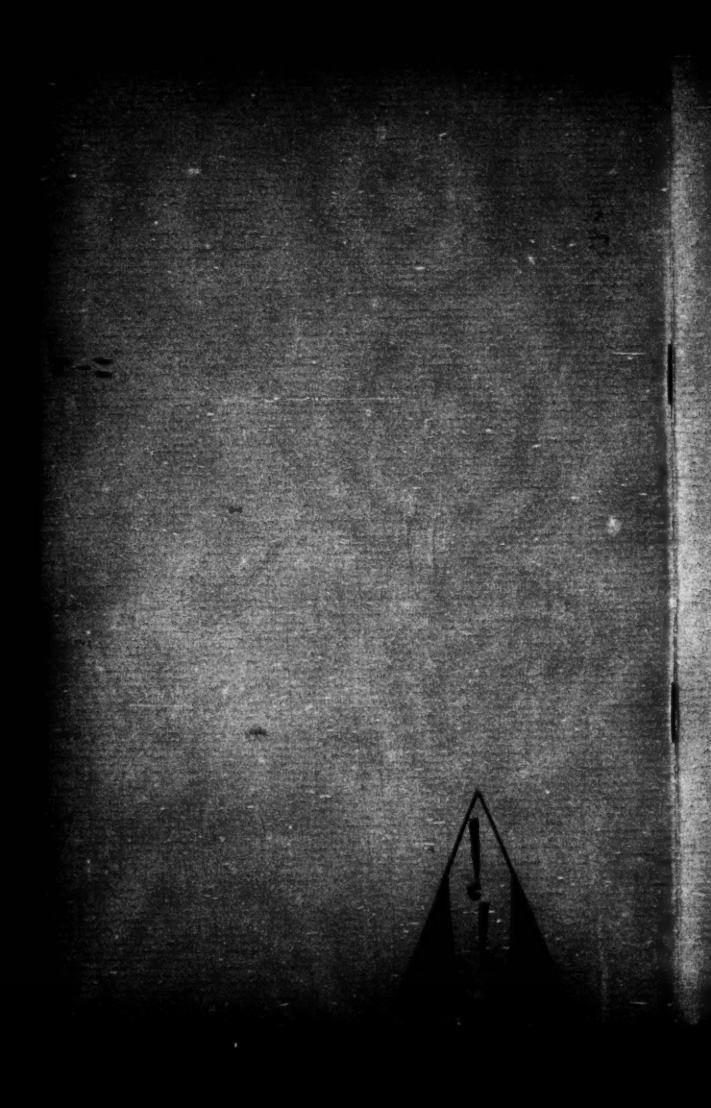
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